



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Danbury, CT

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

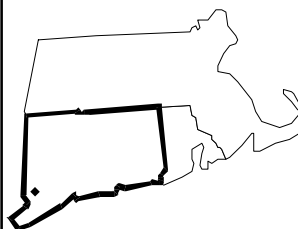
BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Danbury for a Brownfields Pilot. Danbury, the hub of northern Fairfield County, is a former hat manufacturing center turned corporate base and residential suburban community. Hat-making and related industries were the city's primary economic force until the 1960s. The city has long been known for its Irish, Italian, and Portuguese immigrant communities, and has witnessed a growing Hispanic and Asian population. Data collected in 1996 showed that Danbury contained a labor force of approximately 35,000 with a 5 percent unemployment rate.

The Pilot project targets two sites. The first, Barnum Court, is a one-half-acre property that formerly contained a 4,400-square-foot factory and a 3,100-square-foot warehouse/garage. Previously conducted Phase I, II, and III environmental assessments indicate that volatile organic compound (VOC) levels in groundwater are above state standards and that soil contamination consists of VOCs, lead, and mercury. The city's redevelopment efforts have been hindered by the presence of these contaminants.

The second site is the former Mallory Hat Factory, which operated until 1987, when the company went

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Danbury, Connecticut

Date of Announcement:
September 1997

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets Barnum Court, a one-half-acre property in the city's urban center, and the former Mallory Hat Factory.

Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflld/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

out of business. The site was soon purchased by a prospective developer, who conducted environmental assessments between 1989 and 1991, leading to further investigation of seven areas of potential contamination. In 1998, the city foreclosed on the property due to tax delinquency. An industrial facility adjacent to the hat factory is interested in acquiring the site to create parking for its employees and clients.

OBJECTIVES

To facilitate redevelopment, the Pilot intends to conduct further site investigation at both sites. The city has established a plan that concurrently pursues the environmental restoration of the sites and the commercial redevelopment of the properties. The projects will demonstrate that municipalities can move forward in the commercial rehabilitation of brownfields by providing an innovative approach to completing the environmental restoration of the sites. The plan will take advantage of the various land use zones applicable to the two parcels within the Barnum Court site, as well as the presence of an interested developer for the Mallory Hat Factory site. The city will also seek to use innovative in-situ environmental cleanup technologies for site cleanup. In order to facilitate redevelopment, the city will temporarily retain ownership over the Mallory Hat site and a portion of the Barnum Court property. After further investigation and cleanup, the city will select appropriate redevelopment proposals and convey ownership through negotiated property transfer agreements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Completed a Phase I and Phase II assessments at the Barnum Court site, which identified soil and groundwater contamination;
- Developed specifications for Phase III assessment investigations and an in situ cleanup feasibility study for the Barnum Court site; and
- Completed Phase I and Phase II assessments on the former Mallory Hat Factory and begun the process to sell the property to a developer for redevelopment.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting a Phase III assessments at the Barnum Court site to identify the groundwater contamination source and develop cleanup recommendations and cost estimates;
- Analyzing sediment samples and examining ecological risks at Barnum Court to determine the impact to the riverine ecosystem adjacent to the property; and
- Attempting to identify additional brownfields sites within Danbury to target.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Danbury Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- As a result of the Phase II assessment at the Mallory Hat Factory site, EPA completed a \$550,000 time-critical removal action to mitigate potential imminent threat hazards in March 2000.